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From a high school art studio - to the Capitol Building in Washington.

That's the path taken by a Northwest suburban art student whose work was selected by 8th District Congresswoman Melissa Bean to be exhibited in the nation's capital for an entire year.

Hoffman Estates High School senior Sayali Sakhardande visited Washington last summer to see her work, "Future Generations" hanging in the hallway of the Cannon House, the oldest Congressional office building leading to the Capitol Building.

It is expected, that over the course of the year, her work and the pieces selected from congressional districts across the country will be seen by 100,000 visitors.

Sakhardande was honored this month by the District 211 school board after receiving her award last spring from U.S. Rep. Melissa Bean.

Runners up in the contest included Kayleigh Sansone and Travis Morrison, both Schaumburg High School students, whose works will hang in Bean's Washington and Schaumburg offices, respectively.

In other suburban districts, 10th District Rep. Mark Kirk's office selected Jung Ah Kim from the Woodlands Academy in Lake Forest and her acrylic painting, "Anxiety" to be displayed in Washington. Sixth District Rep. Peter Roskam's office selected Gillian Kellner, a 2009 Wheaton North High School graduate and her ink and watercolor painting, "Freedom in Sight."

They all entered the Congressional Artistic Discovery competition, started in 1982, where members of Congress recognize the talents of their young constituents.

"It's so exciting to think people in Congress will be seeing and viewing my work," says Sakhardande, who also is on her school's swimming and water polo teams and captains the speech team.

Sakhardande's drawing, done in colored pencil, was selected last spring by a panel of judges drawn from surrounding community college art faculties.

Her Advanced Placement art teacher, Cynthia Surtz, says the piece has having a great impact on those who view it, with its uplifting look at the younger generation joyfully embracing the future.

"Her originality and drawing concept is stunning," says Surtz, who now teaches Sakhardande in her commercial art class.

Sakhardande was born in India but came to this country as a small child and has grown up in

Hoffman Estates. She and her parents return every summer to Pune, a cultural capital in western India where much of their extended family still lives.

"I knew I wanted to do something that involved diversity and the youth of America," Sakhardande says.

Consequently, she gathered 20 of her friends, who represent many different races and ethnicities, and took them to Victoria Park in Hoffman Estates for a photo shoot.

"I wanted them all connected and holding hands," Sakhardande says, "but it was while we were waiting for one girl who was late, that they started to jump rope. And that was it. I got my shot.

"It just captured the feeling I was looking for," she adds. "They were truly happy and it seemed so natural."

She created her colored pencil drawing working from the photo. With the amount of figure drawing, layering and crosshatching (a shading technique), it took a month to complete, Sakhardande says.

Now in her senior year and thinking more seriously about her future, Sakhardande is not so sure she wants to major in art. She is looking at a variety of possibilities, she says.

But with her national award, leadership on the speech team, and positive outlook on life, it would seem she has the world at her fingertips.